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MEDIA ADVISORY

Ferguson, like Perry, charged with misapplying veto power

Pa Ferguson one of many notable figures to be discussed at this year's Save Texas History Symposium

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AUSTIN — The governor of Texas faces charges for misapplying his veto power and makes national headlines.

Though that may sound like recent news, it's not. It's front page material from nearly a hundred years ago.

Like Texas Gov. Rick Perry, Gov. James E. "Pa" Ferguson used the power of the pen to cut the budget of a government agency – in Ferguson's case, the University of Texas at Austin – and faced significant opposition for it.

Pa Ferguson, the 26th governor of Texas, was removed from office by the Texas Senate on Aug. 25, 1917. He was the last Texas governor to be called to jail for processing – that is, until Aug. 15, 2014, when Gov. Rick Perry was indicted by a Travis County grand jury.

Known to Texans as half of "Ma and Pa Ferguson," Ferguson is one of the colorful subjects at this year's Save Texas History Symposium — Making Waves on Land and Sea: Legends and Controversy in Texas History. The Symposium is set from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 20, at the William B. Travis Building, 1701 N. Congress Ave., in Austin (just north of the Texas Capitol).

"This being the centennial year of James E. Ferguson's entry into Texas politics, we're at a milestone that invites us to retrospectively reexamine the intertwined legacies of the Fergusons," said presenter Carol O'Keefe Wilson, who will discuss Ferguson at 3 p.m.

Perry was charged with misusing his veto power over the state budget to force the resignation of the Travis County District Attorney. He is fighting the charges.

In Ferguson's case, he vetoed a large swath of funding for the University of Texas after several instructors did not resign per his prior insistence. Ferguson failed in his attempt to ward off charges of official impropriety; he was impeached and summarily defeated in the next primary election. He was barred from the ballot in subsequent elections.

However, this put wind in the sails for the candidacy of his wife, Miriam A. “Ma” Ferguson, who used the campaign slogan “two governors for the price of one.” Ma Ferguson became the first female governor of Texas, serving from 1925-29 and 1933-35.

Returning to Austin for its fifth year, the 2014 Save Texas History Symposium will investigate notable and notorious characters that color Texas history – looking at the drive and motivation that turned good people into bad and solid citizens into Texas heroes.

Other speakers and subjects at the Save Texas History Symposium include: Dr. Thomas Hatfield on former Texas Land Commissioner and Normandy invasion leader James Earl Rudder; Dr. Jerry Thompson speaking on Mexican folk hero and outlaw Juan Cortina; and Dr. Bruce Winders, Alamo historian, on Mexican General Santa Anna.

The cost is \$62 per person, which includes a barbecue lunch buffet (with vegetarian option). For additional information contact James Harkins at 1(512)463-3289 or james.harkins@glo.texas.gov, or D’Anne Stites at 1(512)463-6740 or danne.stites@glo.texas.gov. To register online, or for further information, visit <http://www.glo.texas.gov/save-texas-history/symposium.html>.

WHAT: Save Texas History Symposium

WHO: Top Texas historians and history enthusiasts

WHEN: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 20, 2014

WHERE: William B. Travis Building, 1701 N. Congress Ave., Austin

WHY: To investigate notable characters who color Texas history, like Pa Ferguson

COST: \$62 (lunch included)

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